



Greetings to you in Christ Jesus this season! We apologize for the gap in news these past couple of months. A great deal has happened since our return from Russia late September, and it's been difficult to keep our "newsletter drafts" up-to-date!

First, we want to say "thank you!" to so many folks who have welcomed us and blessed us since we've been back in the states! We've spent time with Mountain View UMC in Woodstock, GA, Stallville UMC in Summerville, SC, with Hebardville UMC in Waycross, GA, at Norcross FUMC in Norcross, GA and were invited to speak at our home church in Kennesaw, GA, Kennesaw UMC. Everyone at each place has truly blessed us with your prayers and support and love, especially during this time of being without our own home and of waiting on the Lord to show us His way!

We want to give you an update on a couple of things that have developed for our family since returning from Russia late-September:

- First – We discovered that the transmission in our van needed to be replaced immediately, which is an expense we were not expecting. However, because we have family who are such good customers of the dealership, they reduced the cost of the transmission by almost half! So paying off the bill will be much easier for us!
- Second – You may remember, because St. Petersburg is such an expensive city, we had planned for Charlie to work there 2 days a week doing engineering work with a company here in the U.S. to help cover our costs. About a month ago, that company laid off many of its employees, and put a freeze on all contract work. So, essentially this means that we have lost about \$1800/month in financial support while in Russia.

Because of these developments, we were unable to return to St. Petersburg in November as expected. Despite this disappointing news, after much prayer, Charlie and I agree that we need to just keep moving forward in the direction God is leading until He turns us around! We are continuing our support-raising while also looking for as much work as we can find to cover our expenses here in the states. Regarding our living arrangements here, my mom and her husband have very graciously offered to let us to stay with them during this time. We are so grateful for the way the Lord has blessed us through them!

Most of our belongings are in St. Petersburg now and we are registered to begin language school there in January. However, we can not honestly say when exactly the Lord is going to lead us into Russia. We are working to seek Him first every day, and to believe that His timing will be exactly perfect, even if we don't know when it is until the day we leave!!!

Where we are now: There are several of you who have been supporting this ministry for several months. Because of your faithfulness, we now have all we need in the way of **launching funds** available for us to move onto the field!

Regarding the **monthly commitments** we need to stay on the field: While as I mentioned above we've had a significant drop in this during the past month, we are already beginning to make it up, as we've also had the blessing of several new commitments from individuals desiring to partner with us in what the Lord is doing, and currently are at 48% of our required monthly support!

During these past several weeks, I admit that it has taken some time for both Charlie and I to come to accept that the Lord's plans for us this season are somewhat different than what we'd anticipated. Honestly, there have been some times of feeling discouragement, and even sadness, that the doors into St. Petersburg are not yet open. What I'd like to try to express, however, is how much the thought of all of you who are remembering us and praying for us and loving us with God's love has meant during this time.

We have heard from many of you about some of the struggles and trials you have been experiencing during these past months. We know that this holiday season may be bringing with it some difficult emotions for many of you: anxiety over the loss of a job – sadness because maybe you're not able to afford to buy as many gifts or travel to see as many friends and relatives as you'd like – grief over the loved ones who are not with you - loneliness that sometimes comes from seeing families out shopping and seeing Santa, or from driving by all of the other houses lit with Christmas lights when you can't be where you want to be.

I'd like to try to encourage you this season by letting you know how much you mean to me and Charlie. **I'd also like to offer a few ideas:**

- Maybe pick up the phone and call those old friends whom you haven't seen in months and plan a night out for dessert and coffee this month.
- While gas prices are down, go knock on your neighbor's door and ask them to go out driving with your family to see Christmas lights.
- Find out from your church the name of an elderly person who is unable to get out and take them a pie (or some baked bread if more appropriate!).
- Take your kids to spend an afternoon giving out candy canes or homemade cards at a nursing home, or to help serve one day at a soup bowl.
- Make the phone call you've been putting off to the person who you feel really doesn't deserve it. Choose in Christ Jesus to forgive them this season, whether you feel like it or not. Tell them you love them and ask the Lord to make your heart feel His love for them.
- Have your family write down different ways God has provided for them this year on pieces of paper, and decorate your tree with them. Then spend time together Christmas Eve reading all of the papers aloud.

We spend so much energy each season making sure everything gets done, and so often we're left feeling empty. With so much time to share and celebrate Jesus this season, it seems we should come away in the new year feeling refreshed and revived. So often, however, many of us need the early days of the new year just to “recover” from the holidays!!!

We are the church – the bride and body of Christ. We belong to one another. Let's ask the Lord to move through us to bless and love one another this season.

May His presence in each hour this season bring His love and healing to even the most difficult areas in your life, and may you enter the new year knowing and loving and believing Him more than today!

We love you so much!
Love and blessings to you in Christ Jesus!
Charlie and Miki Chastain



Ways to donate to this ministry:

To make a donation by check:

- send a check to the following address, noting “Chastain/Russia 322” in the memo:

The Mission Society
6234 Crooked Creek Road
Norcross, GA 30092

To make a donation by credit card or electronic debit:

- go to our website: www.actsofadvocacy.org and click on “Give” to go to the Mission Society “donations” page.